been computerised Equipment for computerisation of the office at Visakhapatnam is also already in place. Government propose to open Passport Collection Centers at Vijayawada and Tirupati, subject to allocation of appropriate office space by the state government.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Suggestions for Government's consideration may be forwarded either through the Passport Offices or directly to the Ministry of External Affairs.

Discussions held with U.S. Energy Secretary

946. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether U.S. Energy Secretary visited India last month; if so, the details of the discussions held; and

(b) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Slave Trade

947. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Delhi a centre of slave trade to UK" which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated the April 27, 1998; and

(b) if so, the reaction thereto including the immediate steps taken to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Applications pending in Regional Passport Offices

948. SHRI BHAGAVAN MAJHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending in each of the regional passport offices in the country as on date;

(b) the time since when these are pending and the reasons for the delay; and

(c) the details of the period under which all formalities related to issue of passport are likely to be completed/ cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) A tabulated statement of passport applications pending in various Passport Offices is laid on the table of the House. The reasons for delay in issue of passport are normally receipt of negative or incompelte reports from police authorities, discrepancies in documents submitted by the applicants, particularly in respect of applications received by post, lack of response from applicants who are asked to submit additional documents, etc. Every effort is being made to expedite disposal and clear the backlog of pending applications.